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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Streamlining Personnel Management Processes

JANUARY 1993

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BLM *has an unusual opportunity to streamline and simplify personnel management for the benefit of the organization and its people. The findings and recommendations of the task force that authored* Streamlining Personnel Management Processes *identified both short term (through existing authorities) and future actions (those that need new or revised authorities) that make a significant difference. If the changes are enacted, the authors of the report believe that BLM will better serve the public, improve morale, strengthen recruitment efforts, produce a more efficient and equitable performance evaluation system and improve the quality of life for all employees.*

Positive changes that are immediately available to improve BLM personnel management are identified in the first section of this report, *65 Steps to Make Personnel Management Easier*. A sample of recommendations in this section includes:

- Standardize position descriptions, KSAs, and PIPRs. These actions alone represent a 30% savings in time and effort and relieve substantial frustration by BLM field managers and personnel offices, the workgroup concluded.

- Simplify use of the SF-52, "Notification of Personnel Action" form.

- Target specific training dollars in the annual work plan.

- Replace promotion panels with subject matter experts, to help speed the hiring process.

- Initiate health and wellness programs for all BLM locations.

- Conduct more local training.

- Ensure vacancy announcement closing dates are consistent throughout the Bureau.

Five issues are addressed in the remainder of the report. They focus on Recruitment, Mobility and Tenure, Performance, Quality of Life, and the Future Workforce Composition of the Bureau of Land Management. Each of these sections contains recommendations that will help improve BLM efforts in these critical functions.

The Personnel Management workgroup was also asked to identify actions that involve automation. Personnel management actions (recommendations) that can be improved through automation are in italicized print and preceded with an *(A)* in the *65 Steps to Make Personnel Management Easier* section.

Not all important personnel management issues have been addressed in the *Future Actions* section of this report. Other important issues that were considered and need further analysis but not included because of time constraints are: Employee Relations, Classification, Awards, Pay, Benefits, Labor Relations, Safety, and Equal Employment Opportunity.

These additional issues should be addressed as the quest for excellence continues to develop a personnel management process that is efficient, equitable, innovative and fulfills the needs of all employees.

Bureau Management Team decisions adopted at the BMT meeting December 8-9, 1992, in Phoenix, Arizona are found on pages: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 21, 22 and 25.

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THE TEAM

Lead State Director

Delmar Vail
State Director,
Boise, Idaho

Team Leader

Fritz Rennebaum
District Manager,
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Analyst/Facilitator

Jack G. Peterson
Assistant to the Deputy Director,
Washington D.C. / Boise, Idaho

Outside Agency Advisor

Max Gallegos
Personnel Chief,
Pacific Northwest Region,
Bureau of Reclamation,
Boise, Idaho

Supporting State Directors

Ed Spang
State Director,
Anchorage, Alaska

Jim Parker
State Director,
Salt Lake City, Utah

Team Members

Karl Sakaeda
Branch Chief, Information Resources,
Utah State Office,
Salt Lake City, Utah

Jack Mellor
Associate District Manager,
Steese-White Mountain District,
Fairbanks, Alaska

Ramona Chinn
Branch Chief, Conveyance,
Alaska State Office,
Anchorage, Alaska

Meg Jensen
Area Manager,
Gila Resource Office,
Safford, Arizona

Jim Currivan
District Manager,
Battle Mountain District,
Battle Mountain, Nevada

Sandy Courtney
Administrative Officer,
Idaho Falls District,
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Concetta Stewart
Personnel Specialist,
Personnel Office,
Washington D.C.

Ceci Sturm
Equal Opportunity Specialist,
Arizona State Office,
Phoenix, Arizona

Editor

Don Smurthwaite
Public Affairs Specialist,
Idaho State Office,
Boise, Idaho

Layout & Design

Meggan Jensen
Visual Information Specialist,
Idaho State Office,
Boise, Idaho

Administrative Support

Vicki Russell
Staff Assistant to the State Director,
Idaho State Office,
Boise, Idaho

65 Steps That Will Make Personnel Management Easier

BLM can take steps now to make personnel management more efficient for all employees. New authorization isn't needed to turn these steps into reality. The Washington Office can establish the policies and then empower State Offices, the National Interagency Fire Center and the Service Center to implement them. Taking these steps will simplify and speed up personnel actions, allowing more time and attention for managing resources.

CLASSIFICATION UNDER THE GENERAL SCHEDULE

Standard Position Descriptions and Evaluation Statements

Finding: Many positions in the Bureau are similar enough to have a standard generic position description written. Although BLM has several standard position descriptions in published instruction memorandums, they often are not seen by field-level supervisors. Standard position descriptions are published in the 1400-302 (Seasonal Employment) section of the BLM Manual.

Recommendation: Consolidate and publish existing standard descriptions in a BLM Handbook with the classification approved on the OF-8 and attached position evaluation statement. Require supervisors to use available approval standard position descriptions and keep them within 80% accuracy. Continue to develop new standard position descriptions and revise BLM Handbook as necessary.

BMT Decision: Approved.

(A) Recommendation: Provide field offices with standard position descriptions as word processing documents.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Standard Statements of Difference

Finding: Positions are written for the full performance level (FPL) with intervening levels described in a "statement of difference" amendment attached to FPL position descriptions. Supervisors generally have to create this statement of difference for each position.

Recommendation: Publish standard statements of difference as part of the new BLM Handbook that contains standard position descriptions.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Accretion of Duties

Finding: Supervisors must justify accretion of duties on a separate statement from the proposed position description. Accretion of duties occurs from either changes in the position or impact of the person on the job.

Recommendation: Eliminate the need for an extensive statement to justify the upgrade. A short paragraph will do. Recognize positions that may be promoted because of impact of person on the job. Make accretion of duties actions easier by allowing the use of standard position descriptions.

BMT Decision: Educate managers and supervisors as to the difference between accretion of duties, impact of person on the job, and standard position descriptions. Include in the education process how to recognize: 1) when a standard position description applies (standard position description includes grade); 2) when accretion of duties may have occurred, including the fact that accretion cannot occur as a result of a planned management action; 3) how to request an audit to document impact of person on the job.

Super Technicians/Scientists

Finding: Rightsizing has diminished the creation of Senior Technical Specialist (STS) positions in BLM. The new technical challenges facing BLM require a cadre of Senior Technicians, e.g. air quality, computer science, toxic material management and other fields.

Recommendation: Support STS and/or scientist positions outside of rightsizing at all levels to encourage retention and provide technical career ladders.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Classification Flexibility

Finding: Some classifiers interpret classification standards very narrowly or do not utilize new standards that either replace or supplement existing ones.

Recommendation: More flexibility must be demonstrated by classifiers.

BMT Decision: Adequate training in the interpretation of classification standards must be provided to classifiers. Classifiers will also receive guidance on displaying proper attitudes.

PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT PLAN

Promotion Panels

Finding: BLM Manual requires rating panels for 10 or more applicants at each grade level. Delays occur until panels are convened and applicants rated.

Recommendation: Use subject matter experts (SME) at each state office to rate applicants when there are 10 or more at each grade level. Revise BLM Manual accordingly.

BMT Decision: All qualified applicant files will be provided to the lowest line officer in the unit filling a position. If that individual decides that a panel must be convened, he/she will contact the SPO for guidance. All individuals will be interviewed unless a list is paneled, resulting in individuals being disqualified from consideration.

Standard Knowledge, Skills, and Ability (KSA) Statements and Crediting Plans

Finding: Supervisors must develop KSAs for each position they announce using forms 1400-98 and 1400-99. Many times the supervisor will request KSAs from the SPO or use what is available.

Recommendation: In conjunction with standard position descriptions, develop standard KSAs and crediting plans for each standard position description.

BMT Decision: Approved.

(A) Recommendation: Provide standard KSAs and crediting plans to SPOs as word processing documents.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Spousal Placement

Finding: Current spousal placement policy is vague and does not always provide assistance to employees.

Recommendation: Develop policy that assigns placement assistance responsibility to receiving line officer.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Mobility and Tenure Policy

Finding: Current policy is often arbitrary and capricious in application.

Recommendation: Apply policy in a uniform and consistent manner.

BMT Decision: Defer response to the section in this report entitled *Mobility and Tenure* (p. 13).

Vacancy Announcement Closing Dates

Finding: BLM Manual allows a 5-day extension beyond the closing date on a case-by-case basis if the applicant contacts the SPO before the closing date. Some states have "automatic" 5-day extensions; others require the applicant to call and request the extension.

Recommendation: Revise BLM Manual to require all applications to be received by the SPO no later than close-of-business on the announcement's closing date. Extend length of announcement period accordingly.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Vacancy Announcements (AVADS)

Finding: Vacancy announcements are not consistently distributed to all BLM offices.

(A) Recommendation: Automated Vacancy Announcement Distribution System (AVADS) is scheduled for December 1992 or January 1993 for BLM. AVADS will automate the Department vacancy announcement system. All merit promotion announcements will be on this system.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Interviews

Finding: BLM Manual requires interviews with *all* applicants referred on a merit promotion roster. Other Interior agencies do not have this practice.

Recommendation: Revise BLM Manual to eliminate this provision.

BMT Decision: Rejected. The BMT felt it was important for managers to give each applicant full consideration.

Merit Promotion for GS/GM-13s and Above

Finding: Recommended applicants' files are routinely passed by members of the Assistant Secretary's Office.

Recommendation: Discontinue this practice.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Career Tracks/Ladders

Finding: Career tracks/ladders, e.g. 5/7/9/11, are not consistently being utilized, nor are they fully understood by Bureau managers.

Recommendation: Their availability must be clarified and options identified throughout BLM. Senior Technical Specialist (professional and technician) positions must be further developed and explained so the options are well understood and therefore made available and incorporated into this process at all line office levels. Managers and supervisors must create ladders or bridges for internal placements.

BMT Decision: Approved.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Standard Performance Plans (PIPRs)

Finding: Currently, supervisors struggle with writing performance elements and standards.

Recommendation: When standard position descriptions are developed, performance elements and standards could be written for each PIPR.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation to the extent that it is the manager's/supervisor's option to use standard performance elements and standards.

(A) Recommendation: These performance elements and standards could be provided to all field offices as word processing documents.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation to the extent that it is the manager's/supervisor's option to use such word processing documents.

National Performance Standards for Personnel Specialists

Finding: Simple position classification actions sometimes take 6-8 months to process. Publishing vacancy announcements can take up to 6 months. Positions can take over a year to fill.

Recommendation: Establish national performance standards for personnel specialists. Five days to start any action (i.e., 5 days for classification, 5 days to announce a vacancy, 5 days to issue a roster, etc.)

BMT Decision: Establish local performance standards for personnel specialists.

PROCESSING PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Use of SF-52, Notification of Personnel Action

Finding: The SF-52 process generally begins with the supervisor or line officer. An area office initiates the SF-52, with all its supplementary forms, by sending it to the District Office, which in turn sends the forms to the SPO. Along the way, the SF-52 is controlled and checked for proper authorization and accuracy. This requires personnel at each level to be trained in completing the SF-52 and preparing proper personnel actions.

Recommendation: Eliminate use of the SF-52 at all levels except the SPO. Use the SF-52 as an internal personnel office working document only. Do not create additional forms or processes to replace

the SF-52. All a manager or supervisor has to do is call, fax, or E-mail the basic information to the SOP to begin an action (documents that require a signature follow).

BMT Decision: Approved.

(A) Recommendation: The SF-52 module of the Federal Pay Personnel System (FPPS) is scheduled for June 1993. FPPS will automate the SF-52. This module should be kept for internal SPO use only, with the same intent as the above. This would result in significant savings in equipment and training, freeing field personnel to focus on operational duties.

BMT Decision: Approved.

EMPLOYMENT

Full Performance Level (FPL) of Positions in Grades 5/7/9/11

Finding: Some supervisors and personnel specialists are under the impression that positions cannot be filled now at lower than two grade intervals below the FPL of the position.

Recommendation: Educate supervisors and encourage the filling of positions at the lowest possible, feasible levels.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Drug Testing

Finding: The current drug testing system, run by the Department, is slow and unpredictable.

(A) Recommendation: The Department is in the process of automating the drug testing program to allow SPOs access to its data-base. That may allow field offices to submit names for drug testing directly to the Department and the SPO to access the system for the results.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Use Existing Authorities for Best Management

Finding: SPO and managers use only those hiring authorities with which they are familiar and comfortable.

Recommendation: Educate managers and personnel specialists on all hiring authorities, including nontraditional authorities, outstanding scholar program, cooperative education, upward mobility and those portrayed in the Department handbook, *Managers' Quick Guide to Filling Vacancies*, first developed by Idaho.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Selection Authority

Finding: States currently have authority to recruit for positions through the GS/GM-15 level. Positions at the GS-13 and above must be pre-approved for recruitment by the Washington Office Personnel Management Committee (PMC) and the selection post-approved before a job offer is made.

Recommendation: Abolish Washington Office PMC; delegate selection authority for GS/GM-15 to states/centers.

BMT Decision: Rejected. Recommendation superceded by prior BMT decision (same BMT meeting) concerning roles of the Washington Office PMC.

Delegation of Authority (Empowerment)

Finding: Staffs are not empowered to conduct business efficiently.

Recommendation: Delegate to the lowest level where efficiencies occur that result in fewer pre-signature reviews; rely on more spot checks. Empower staff (non-supervisory/non-line) to approve resource and administrative decisions. Revise BLM Manual 1203 accordingly.

BMT Decision: Approved.

FEORP/Affirmative Action

Finding: Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) and Affirmative Action are often viewed by managers as negative programs and the responsibility of SPOs and EEO offices.

Recommendation: Educate managers about their responsibilities for these programs, encourage participation, and improve accountability.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Summer Hires/Stay-in-School/ Cooperative Education

Finding: Managers, supervisors, and personnel specialists are not always aware of the flexibility of these programs. Some SPOs are interpreting the requirements for these appointments too rigidly, or are not aware of recent changes which make these authorities more flexible. Prospective co-ops must now contact each state office to determine if any positions are available.

Recommendation: Use available authorities to further BLM's mission. Educate personnel specialists, managers, and supervisors about the flexibility of these appointing authorities. A centralized staff should be aware of Bureau-wide co-op vacancies. Veteran's preference for co-ops must be applied consistently.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recruitment Bulletin Board

Finding: Recruiters are unable to determine the array of available positions.

Recommendation: Establish a recruitment bulletin board.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Funding Designated Recruitment Efforts

Finding: Funding is not being consistently allocated for recruitment.

Recommendation: Allocate funding for designated recruitment efforts.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Regional Civilian Labor Force Statistics

Finding: BLM's individual state's AEP goal and subsequent recruitment efforts are based on national Civilian Labor Force (CLF) statistics. The national CLF statistics do not usually reflect the individual state's population or work force.

Recommendation: Identify Regional Civilian Labor Force (RCLF) statistics that more accurately reflect the population and available work force pool from which to recruit.

BMT Decision: Approved.

POSITION MANAGEMENT

Generalists vs. Specialists

Finding: BLM is hiring traditional resource professionals such as range conservationists, foresters and wildlife biologists. With new approaches including ecosystem management and biodiversity, the nature of the work is changing.

Recommendation: Add more professionals in various emerging interdisciplinary occupations such as ecologists and natural resource specialists.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation to make it clear that interdisciplinary occupations would be added to those units where BLM can enhance ecosystem management.

Expand Ratios of Technician-to-Professional in Field Workforce

Finding: At the field level most positions are resource professionals.

Recommendation: Hire more technicians and administrative support to replace some professional positions at field locations.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Career Tracks//Ladders

Finding: Positions are filled on an as-needed basis. Little thought is given to where an employee may progress.

Recommendation: Design and define Bureauwide career tracks/ladders, such as a 5/7/9/11 progression, for employees in all occupations and at all levels.

BMT Decision: Approved.

TRAINING

Timing with PAWP

Finding: Phoenix Training Center (PTC) requests nominations for the fiscal year before the Preliminary Annual Work Plan is published. Managers are unsure of their budgets when PTC makes its request.

Recommendation: Place PTC training on a calendar year basis.

BMT Decision: Review the nomination process with intent to provide a mechanism to give input on training needs before the annual work plan (AWP) is developed.

PTC vs. Outside Provider

Finding: PTC provides specific training sessions for BLM occupations and work processes.

Recommendation: Investigate contracting some courses to outside providers.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Centralized (PTC) vs. Local Training

Finding: Traditionally, because of the scheduling, funding, and lead time required, many courses are taught at the PTC.

Recommendation: Where a large number of attendees are in the same area, it is more efficient to teach a course at a field location rather than at the PTC. This would also provide an opportunity for students who otherwise were not scheduled for a course due to budget constraints to take the course locally.

BMT Decision: Approved.

(A) Recommendation: The latest technologies in teaching, including television, teleconferencing, videos, etc. should be used to reduce need for employee travel to for training.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Individual Development Plans

Finding: The use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) is optional and not consistently used throughout BLM.

Recommendation: Make consistent mandatory use of IDPs part of the performance rating process throughout BLM to assist employees with career and personal goals.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation to make IDPs mandatory for GS-9s and below, new employees of less than five years, and new supervisors.

(A) Recommendation: The training process could be automated, including IDPs. The training requirements could be placed in a common database that could complete the employee's IDP and at the same time provide a compilation of the Bureau's training needs. An automated training management system would start with a skills assessment on IDPs through completed training. The target system (modernization) should be able to handle the shared database requirement of the system.

BMT Decision: A clear distinction must be made between an IDP and a training plan, as there is much more to an IDP than just training.

Increase Training Priority

Finding: Funding for training and travel is often shifted to reduce pressures on other operational needs.

Recommendation: Target specific dollars for training in the annual work plan.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Guarantee Training Budget for Each Individual

Finding: Training is provided on an "as needed" basis and is perceived by employees as arbitrary or as a reward.

Recommendation: Create an equitable training budget for individual employees to guarantee training.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Establish Mechanism to Teach Basic Personnel Processes to Supervisors

Finding: New supervisors are required to have 80 hours of training when they are selected, and an 8-hour refresher course each year thereafter. Supervisory training generally focuses on theories of supervision.

Recommendation: Provide training and refresher courses in each unit to discuss general procedures of the personnel process and pertinent topics of supervision (e.g., writing position descriptions, how to fill positions, etc.).

BMT Decision: Approved.

National Workshop for New Changes in Personnel Management Processes

Finding: The actions recommended in this document, when adopted, will create rapid change in personnel work.

Recommmendation: Conduct a national workshop for personnel specialists and managers to promote these changes and create a partnership between managers and personnelists.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Training Managers in Group Dynamics, Problem Solving, and Meeting Management

Finding: Meetings are often stalled and decisions delayed because a consensus cannot be reached. This occurs at all levels of the organization.

Recommendation: Require group problem-solving training for all managers as well as periodic refresher training.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Leadership

Finding: Organizational survival in the 90s requires strong leadership. Leadership and management are not necessarily synonymous.

Recommendation: Incorporate formal and informal (e.g. workgroups) leadership training similar to the programs of corporate America.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Training Prior to Job Performance

Finding: Many employees new to the organization need training in order to do their jobs immediately after being hired.

Recommendation: BLM must accept responsibility to train (e.g., corporate culture, improving skills, specific technologies, etc.) individuals prior to requiring them to perform their new jobs.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Sabbatical Program

Finding: The opportunity to participate in a sabbatical program is not available to employees.

Recommendation: Such a program should be considered by BLM for furthering an individual's education and/or research opportunities that would ultimately serve the employee and BLM.

BMT Decision: Approved.

INCENTIVE AWARDS

The incentive awards process must be simplified. Current award systems discourage supervisors from recognizing employees by being time consuming, difficult, and cumbersome.

Special Act Awards

Finding: Current system requires supervisors to prepare justifications for this type of award and for the amount.

Recommendation: Revise BLM Manual to minimize justification. One paragraph is ideal, outlining only what is needed for letter of commendation or award certification. Allow supervisor the flexibility to select award amount using Departmental guidelines.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation by deleting the last sentence. (The BMT felt there was adequate flexibility provided by current guidelines.)

Sustained Superior Performance Awards and Quality Step Increases

Finding: Current system requires supervisor to prepare justifications for sustained superior performance awards above (or below) the minimum level (1%-3% for level 4, 3%-5% for level 5).

Recommendation: Revise BLM Manual and process to allow supervisor to select any amount within the Departmental range with only a completed performance rating serving as the justification.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Other Awards

Finding: On-the-spot cash awards, nonmonetary awards, other awards, and delegation of awards authority are not being used consistently throughout BLM.

Recommendation: Delegate maximum authority to lowest levels and maximize use of other awards.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Awards Committees

Finding: Currently awards committees are an additional step in the process and "second guess" the supervisor. Awards committees are a barrier to the benefits of incentive awards.

Recommendation: Revise BLM Manual to eliminate awards committees. Personnel offices will provide "cursory" technical review of awards.

BMT Decision: Revise BLM Manual to make awards committees optional. Personnel offices will provide "cursory" technical review of awards.

How the Award is Presented

Finding: BLM Manual states awards should be presented at an appropriate ceremony and publicized in an appropriate manner.

Recommendation: Supervisors should take into consideration the feelings of employees, cultural differences, peer recognition, etc., before presenting the award.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Fund Allocation

Finding: Currently, funds for awards are from the benefiting subactivity and influence amounts of awards.

Recommendation: Budget for awards throughout the year.

BMT Decision: Approved.

APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

Labor Relations

Finding: There are no recognized experts in labor relations within BLM who can dedicate their full time to this activity; nor is there program coordination.

Recommendation: Establish a Bureauwide labor relations expert.

BMT Decision: Approved.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Upward Mobility

Finding: A formal upward mobility program is not being used by BLM. Informal use of this program is haphazard.

Recommendation: Develop a formal upward mobility program to be used throughout BLM. Using sound principles of position management, have managers set aside at least one or two technical or professional positions which could be targeted for use in a formalized program. Inform and advise supervisors and managers about the use of Upward Mobility as a recruitment and retention tool.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Retention Opportunity

Finding: Supervisors' responsibilities for employee development are not being consistently practiced.

Recommendation: Reinforce supervisors' responsibilities for employee development. This must be presented to the employee as a genuine BLM manager/supervisor pursuit.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Career Counseling

Finding: Supervisors are generally lacking in career counseling knowledge and skills.

Recommendation: A workshop to provide guidance for career counselors (generally supervisors/line officers) must be perfected. Planning a career must be encouraged and taught; the mobility and tenure policy must be explained; personal considerations must be taken into account when relocating employees. Management must select a sponsor to help each new employee adjust to the community and work environment. Quality mentoring must be made available.

BMT Decision: Future supervisory training will include a component on career counseling; subjects included will be career

planning, mobility and tenure policy, employee relocation considerations, selection and use of sponsors, and mentoring needs.

PAY UNDER THE GENERAL SCHEDULE

Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA)

Finding: FEPCA is not being used in the field.

Recommendation: Establish policy to use authorities from FEPCA such as relocation bonuses, pay for interviews, etc.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Newly approved OPM pay reform authorities permit a wide-range of incentives that many BLM managers may not be familiar with. The authorities allow:

- Setting a higher within-grade level for new appointments, based on superior qualifications, generally not to exceed 20 percent of current pay.

- Payment of travel and transportation expenses for new appointments and for pre-employment interviews. This should prove to be a valuable recruitment tool for new hires who otherwise would not have the means to pay for a move.

- Re-employment of military and federal civilian retirees without loss of pay or annuity to meet exceptional employment needs.

- Exceptions to the GS-15 step 10 biweekly maximum earnings limitation in connection with an emergency involving a natural disaster.

- Setting the rate of basic pay for one or more positions designated as critical positions.

- Setting interim geographic adjustments of up to 8% of basic pay in one or more consolidated metropolitan statistical areas and/or metropolitan statistical areas that meet certain criteria.

- Payment of recruitment and relocation bonuses, retention allowances, and advances in pay to certain categories of federal employees and establish a limitation on aggregate compensation that may be received.

- Payment of a supervisory differential to those supervising non-GS employees with higher pay. We essentially have always had this authority for GS supervisors over Wage Grade employees.

- Deletion of the restriction that hazardous duty must be "irregular or intermittent" for entitlement to hazardous pay differential.

- Ability to waive the prohibition of payment of hazard pay differential to employees in occupations where the hazardous duty is taken into account in the classification.

- Payment of cash awards based on performance and granting time off from duty as an incentive award.

HOURS OF DUTY

Flexible Work Place and Hours

Finding: Some managers have not considered the flexi-time/place policies in the operation of their organization.

Recommendation: Establish Bureauwide policy allowing maximum flexibility with alternate work schedules for all offices; and legitimate consideration of flexible work place options for all offices.

BMT Decision: Modify the recommendation to assure that management team members are following existing policy and are providing guidance that permits employees be given legitimate consideration for alternative work schedules; all the while, remaining cognizant of the requirements to operate the work unit.

ABSENCE AND LEAVE SHARING

Leave Sharing

Finding: Leave sharing rules are being applied inconsistently throughout BLM.

Recommendation: Prepare BLM Manual guidance on leave sharing. Delegate authority the same as sick leave for approval (i.e., supervisor approves). SPOs to perform only technical review and processing.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Time and Attendance

Finding: Time sheets are posted by hand, signed by the supervisor and entered into the Remote Entry Time and Attendance Reporting System (RETARS). Supervisors verify leave taken and overtime worked before and after the fact. Some states are using crew reports.

(A) Recommendation: Time sheets could be automated where employees electronically keep track of their time and supervisors verify by post audit. Supervisors' signatures and verification could be made after the time sheets are submitted. Automated time reporting would avoid redundancy.

BMT Decision: Deferred, pending outcome of the Oregon pilot project. Also, refer to the relative BMT decision included in the *Local Business Practices* section.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Finding: Programs vary from state-to-state and location-to-location. Some provide short-term counseling services and others only referral services. EAPs in larger cities and towns may have better coverage than rural areas.

Recommendation: Establish Bureauwide policies on coverage of EAPs. Include maximum coverage to all employees and family members (including non-traditional family members, for example, significant others, spouse's children from previous marriage living with other parent, family members outside the household). Provide cost-efficient short-term local counseling services to all employees.

BMT Decision: Review Bureauwide policies on coverage of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

Health and Wellness Programs

Finding: Health and Wellness programs vary in application from state-to-state. Utah has a federally employed health promotion specialist to run its program; other states have contracted with Health and Human Services (HHS) to run their programs; other states have no formal program.

Recommendation: Initiate health and wellness programs throughout BLM for all areas. Provide consistent, cost-effective coverage and application in all offices. Contract services from HHS when no program is in place. Hire state health promotion specialists where applicable. Health and Wellness programs would also cover EAP to include mental well-being.

BMT Decision: Review Health and Wellness programs throughout BLM for all areas.

Safety

Finding: The "grass-roots" approach to personnel safety in BLM needs greater attention. Safety issues generally focus "after-the-fact" and on OSHA issues.

Recommendation: Develop mandatory proactive safety programs within all levels of BLM to include all employees. Examples could include daily "tail-gate" sessions for field crews; educate employees about office hazards (closing file drawers, proper loading of cabinets, etc.); provide monetary incentives for superior safety records and activities; and conduct base-line and annual medical examinations for employees.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Summary

Competition for competent, skilled specialists and managers representing a diversity of backgrounds will intensify in both the public and private sectors in the future. BLM must be creative and aggressive in its recruitment practices to ensure that people are hired with the talent, vision and commitment needed to carry the agency into the next century and beyond.

BLM can take better advantage of opportunities to improve recruitment. For example, there are a number of OPM authorities that can only be used upon request; BLM should request to be a "Test Bureau" and allowed to use such authorities without having to make formal requests once an opportunity requires it. Initiation of a BLM Careers Program would target certain positions/grades and help expedite selections and help to achieve a diversified and well-qualified workforce.

BLM needs to make the hiring process as easy as possible. Job applicants must be provided clear, consistent direction from personnel offices for submitting SF-171s. Faxed and computerized SF-171s should be permitted, with limitations.

BLM's commitment to quality of life must be apparent and set the agency apart as one concerned about the total well-being of its employees.

Offices must be located in quality locations, either in a city or part of a city that is appealing and safe for employees and their families.

These, plus many other steps, are needed to ensure BLM's competitiveness in the current and future job market.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Members of the team reviewed several documents while preparing this section of the report. They include, *BLM Recruitment Plan, Fiscal Years 92-96*; Washington Office IM 92-321, *Achieving a Diversified Workforce*; *BLM Draft Strategic Plan for Human Resource Management*; and *BLM's Skills Acquisition Strategy: Appendix D, Recruitment Team Report.*

A review of the successful recruitment program used by the U.S. Air Force was used, and discussions with BLM employees were also considered in formulating this section.

EXISTING PROCESS

Recruitment by BLM has improved somewhat in the last few years, but generally, only traditional approaches are being used. The vast majority of BLM hiring still comes through issuing vacancy announcements and OPM registers. A fraction of new employees are hired through other means, such as the Outstanding Scholar program, Veterans Readjustment Appointments, or Cooperative Education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: OPM has a number of authorities that are available upon request but can only be used in limited ways, such as direct hiring authorities at job fairs or within newly created enterprise zones. If BLM were designated a Test Bureau and given that kind of authority, hiring qualified candidates would be immeasurably easier in many cases.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Establishing a Careers Program would supplement exisitng procedures. BLM could develop and maintain a skills data base targeting certain positions and grades; individuals could either be encouraged to sign up for the program or it could be consistently implemented.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: The process for drug testing can be a bottleneck for hiring. Currently, the testing takes too long and there is no flexibility. All potential hires for designated positions must be tested. An alternative is that only 30 percent of all targeted positions be randomly tested, and done so in a reasonable length of time. Automation advances, discussed in the "What We Can Do Now" section of this report, may alleviate the length-of-time problem.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Recommendation: Offices must be located in quality locations that appeal to employees and their families.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Recommendation: The application process needs to be clear and simplified to the degree possible. Training and career guidance must be provided to applicants, to meet their best interests and those of BLM. Written guidance is needed regarding the receipt of faxed SF 171s by the SPO. Faxing 171s should be discouraged, but they may be accepted if the situation warrants; they may not be sent from federal agency machines. Computerized 171s should be allowed; a determination of quality and format must be made. Determination of appropriate use of government equipment (computers, copiers, typewriters, etc.) must be made by the supervisor. Software for SF 171 forms should be developed and provided to BLM employees and the public.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: The quality of life offered by BLM, as it relates to the workplace and family needs, must be a strong attraction for employment.

BMT Decision: This recommendation is a general statement. No decision is needed.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF NEW PROCESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The changes suggested in the recommendations section would all have positive implications for BLM.

Use of new OPM and special hiring authorities would facilitate our efforts in hiring a more diversified and well-qualified workforce.

Establishing a skills data bank would reduce response time and increase efficiencies.

Drug testing of 30 percent of designated positions would reduce costs and also be more efficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

BLM needs to continue to seek out new authorities and opportunities to attract the best possible candidates and meet the changing workload of the future.

Summary

BLM's current mobility and tenure policy needs to be updated because of changes in the Washington Office organization occurring in 1991-92, and the sometimes inconsistent manner in which the mobility and tenure policy was applied in the past.

Three policies were examined by the workgroup. They are the three-year minimum tenure, Washington Office experience and family placement assistance.

In each case, recommendations are made that will help to resolve employee concerns about the fairness of mobility and tenure within the agency.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Several approaches were used to evaluate the current mobility and tenure policy and develop recommendations. They included referring to the existing policy, last revised in July 1988. Discussions with the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Marshal Service, the Farmers Home Administration, the U.S. Forest Service and the Federal Highway Administration provided the basis for the workgroup to learn about other agencies' mobility and tenure policy and to compare them with BLM.

Finally, BLM employees were also interviewed to gain further insight about the policy.

EXISTING PROCESS

BLM endorsed a mobility policy to balance the needs of employees with those of management. The policy was intended to develop highly qualified employees with diversified knowledge, skills, and abilities. The current policy can be a useful recruitment and retention tool if it is applied consistently. However, some changes must take place. Changes will be needed to keep pace with a changing workforce, expected in both the public and private sector by the year 2000. A change in our current mobility policy will affect how BLM recruits and retains future employees.

Three sections of the policy need to be changed.

Three-Year Minimum Tenure

Under the current policy, BLM expects that employees will remain in position for a minimum of three years. The policy further states that before a selection is made, full consideration must be given to the time a BLM applicant has served in his or her present position.

This rule has not been consistently applied. Exceptions have been granted or the policy has been ignored. Because of economic conditions and the changing nature of the workforce, the three-year expectation may no longer fulfill all of its original objectives.

Few other agencies have a similar policy. Those that have a mobility policy tend to allow their management officials discretion in the selection of employees. For example, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) mobility policy states, "Employees who are in or aspire to line and key staff positions are expected to be mobile." However, mobility is not expected of employees in different positions and at other levels. The USFS further states in its policy that managers should not reassign or relocate an employee who is not mobile as long as the employee is doing a satisfactory job and there is a continuing need for the employee's position; the employee is not in a developmental position that requires relocation; or the employee is not in or aspiring to a line or key staff position.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also has a mobility policy in place. The policy allows managers and supervisors to encourage employees to be

mobile to enhance their career opportunities. However, management may actively foster geographic movement by exercising its option to competitively advertise vacant career ladder positions when circumstances warrant. Geographic and functional diversity of experience is considered in the FHWA merit promotion process, but only in positions where such diversity is job related.

Again, agencies allow discretionary use of mobility. With that discretion, time limits are not placed on employees as they relate to movement. It was also noted that agencies that had written mobility and tenure policies did not allow exceptions.

Washington Office Experience

BLM policy requires employees to have Washington Office experience prior to their appointment to State Director, Associate State Director, State Office Division Chief, and District Manager positions, although exceptions approved by the Director are allowed. Also, the policy states that employees who are selected for GS/GM-13 positions in the field without Washington Office experience must apply for lateral or promotional opportunities in Washington, D.C., after three years and that GS/GM-13 employees in field positions are subject to reassignment to the Washington Office after three years.

Inconsistent use of the policy has spawned mistrust and animosity toward a policy that was orginated with good intention for management and employees.

Spousal Placement Assistance

This policy addresses the assistance provided to the employee's spouse when the employee transfers within or to BLM. The assistance is only offered at the employee's request. There are no guarantees or assurances that spousal placement will be made.

Consistency in spousal placement needs to be improved. Inconsistencies in the past have caused undue pressure on families who have opted to move. The section, as written, is vague and unclear about what is meant by the word "assistance," and therefore causes an unclear meaning about how it should be applied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mobility and Tenure

Recommendation: The mobility and tenure policy should be revised to eliminate the three-year limitation of retaining employees in position. The three-year tenure is improper implementation of present merit system principles in the regulations of selection and advancement as set out by the Office of Personnel Management. (Reference FPM Bulletin 335-32, June 15, 1988).

BMT Decision: Rejected. The BMT did not feel it was necessary to change policy that allows for exceptions based on hardship situations or to allow for promotion. The BMT did not intend that the policy allow for exceptions for lateral reassignments. Language of policy should be reviewed to assure that it is clear on these points.

Recommendation: Use the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA) to lessen the pressure of mobility. When these authorities are delgated to state offices, they should be used in conjunction with this section of the mobility policy.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Washington Office Experience

Recommendation: Encourage and inform employees about obtaining Washington Office experience. This should be done according to the employee's career aspirations, personal and professional experiences, and goals for career advancement.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Provide Washington Office experience through details or long-term projects. The experience should be developmental and assist employees in their efforts to move into BLM management positions.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Spousal Placement Assistance

Recommendation: Change "Spousal Placement Assistance" to "Family Employment Assistance" to reflect the changing nature of contemporary families.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Revise the present policy to assign responsibility for employment assistance to the receiving line officer.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Provide counseling to dual career couples.

BMT Decision: Approved.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF NEW PROCESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

An indepth study will need to be completed to measure the potential impact and the cost and benefits of any new processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

Management must make a commitment not only when recruiting employees but be committed to maintaining their well-being once they're on board. Work on some long-term changes needs to start now; for example, FEPCA authorities need to be delegated to the field. Further refinement of the Mobility and Tenure policy will need to continue as the BLM workforce evolves in future years.

Summary

Changes in performance evaluation can improve workforce motivation, evaluation efficiency, and mission focus. Most employees believe that BLM's current PIPR system could be a more positive process. Modifications could include two- or three-level ratings rather than the present five levels; group rather than individual evaluations; more verbal and less written reviews; and checklists or brief, "bullet" statements rather than narratives. Greater objectivity, consistency, and simplicity are needed to make the rating process more valuable. Separation of awards from performance evaluation also has been suggested.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Within BLM, supervisors having the greatest success with the process are those who know it well and spend a considerable amount of time throughout the year evaluating performance through discussion with employees. Success seems to come from continuous evaluation rather than annual or even semiannual evaluation. Lengthy documentation at the end-of-year performance evaluation seems unnecessary.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has provided demonstration projects and is reviewing possible future reform. BLM Manual 1400-430 is being reviewed to update the performance management system. The culture and attitudes within our agency are changing; our processes must follow.

EXISTING PROCESS

When BLM adopted the PIPR system in the early 1970s, it was viewed by the agency as better than most others available for that day's employment culture. The current PIPR system was conceived during the heyday of Management by Objectives (MBO), which subsequently has been phased out. Performance management system objectives were designed to treat employees fairly and equitably in training, retention, dismissal, reductions-in-force, awards and promotion.

Retention decisions could be a significant use for PIPRs, although that has been an infrequent use. Recognition and awards can be given without a performance evaluation, but PIPRs are the primary basis for larger cash "incentive" awards. BLM has, for the most part, discontinued use of PIPRs within the merit promotion application system.

The intent of performance evaluation is as a tool to help with mission focus, correct deficiencies, and to award excellent performance while motivating employees. However, many feel that our current PIPR system misses these objectives. Attention focused on ratings impedes the communication process. Documentation necessary for dismissal is too lengthy and rigorous. Rewards that may motivate one individual may stifle others through unhealthy comparisons. Many supervisors may be working too hard to complete mandatory PIPR requirements at the expense of employee motivation and morale. Pressure is exerted on some supervisors to keep ratings within "statistical norms."

RECOMMENDATIONS

BLM employee comments and an evolving employee culture indicate the need for a change in BLM's personnel management system. These recommendations are concepts only. They require additional work on process, regulation, cost-benefit analysis, conformity and flexibilty to adapt. No perfect personnel management system exists, but the best systems have great flexibility and can keep up with a continually changing workforce and culture.

The following recommendations are tied to the ease with which change could be implemented, depending upon manuals, regulation and knowledge of research about different systems. Short-term implementation might exist within current manual or draft manual systems. While it might take considerably longer to implement, radical reform beyond OPM's present authorities is vital to our future personnel management system success. Changes requiring automation and national standardization might also take longer.

Short-Term Changes

Recommendation: Depending on the circumstances, group PIPRs may be appropriate.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Lessen the work of writing elements/standards by standardizing where possible. Simplify lengthy review narratives. For some elements, particularly standardized ones, check-off blocks or partial sentences may be adequate for written documentation. The current process is too arduous for the value achieved. No narrative should be required where the standard has been successfully met.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Using three rating levels with appropriate definitions may reduce anxiety, subjectivity and unhealthy competition for high ratings. Examples of ratings could be "exceptional," "effective," and "unacceptable." No numerical or alphabetical ratings would be attached to these levels.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: The process of documenting for dismissal can be long, confusing and anguishing without appropriate support. Supervisors seeking early personnel office advice and benefiting from management support throughout have the best opportunity for completing the task.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Long Term Changes Requiring New Authorities

Recommendation: The option of awards and recognition independent of PIPRs should be available.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: A review of a new rating level system should be conducted. Considerations need to include:

- [redacted] no rating levels with an optional separate awards system.

BMT Decision: Approved.

- [redacted] two rating levels (effective, unacceptable) with an optional separate award system.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: "Checklist" PIPRs could reduce supervisory paperwork and increase time and incentives for communication.

BMT Decision: Approved. Review the possible use of "checklist" PIPRs which could reduce supervisory paperwork and increase time and incentive for communication. Also, to facilitate implementation, the BMT's instruction was to combine this decision with the second one under *Short-Term Changes*, (p. 18).

Recommendation: Communication throughout the year needs to take place, to remove the anxiety of ratings at a final review. This may require supervisors to determine and release ratings without second-level approval, placing responsibility and authority at the lowest possible level.

BMT Decision: Approved.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF NEW PROCESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OPM appears to be concerned about performance appraisal consistency among federal agencies. Without consistency, federal employees transferring between agencies may not have comparable performance evaluations for training, retention, awards and promotions.

The success of any performance management system depends on its use by individual supervisors. A successful system incorporates continuous dialogue between the supervisor and the employee throughout the year.

Implementation of recommended actions would produce efficiencies and save time and money. However, the greatest benefit will be in improved workforce effectiveness, which cannot be estimated. The desired result is greater workforce productivity with motivated employees participating as a team.

The continuous workforce improvement will result in more effective services to the public, our ultimate customer.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

An implementation program for concepts addressed here will have to be developed after selection of above options/recommendations.

Summary

BLM has implemented a number of programs (including the Employee Assistance Program, the Health and Wellness Program, and Maxiflex) that have improved the quality of life for individuals in the organization.

More needs to be done, however, to support BLM families, including assisting employees in balancing the demands of work with the needs of the family. BLM must strive for a holistic view of employees and their families, recognizing that society and culture are changing.

BLM also must expand the use of leave programs, flexiplace, federally subsidized child and elder care, leavesharing, and parental leave to expand the support system for employees and their families.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Improving the quality of life of employees in the workplace, in order to improve customer service, productivity, and efficiency, was identified as an important aspect of BLM's personnel management effectiveness. BLM has implemented some changes that enhance the quality of the work environment; these improvements have been embraced by the workforce and have improved employee morale.

In this section, ideas are explored for improving employees' mental and physical well-being in the workplace; these steps will improve morale and result in enhanced employee effectiveness and efficiency.

Continuous improvement of employees' quality of life will assure that the agency will continue to attract the very best people available to fulfill our important mandate for quality management of the nation's natural resources.

EXISTING PROCESS

There are three considerations for this topic: the individual, the family, and the integration of work and the family.

Employee Assistance Program

BLM is doing a good job through several programs such as the Employee Assistance Program and the Health and Wellness Program.

The Employee Assistance Program has been adopted by most BLM state offices. In this program, employees may obtain short-term, individual, confidential help with personal and emotional problems. The program also provides a referral service for those with long-term needs. The program is available at no cost to employees. Employee utilization of these services is rising.

Health and Wellness Program

BLM's Health and Wellness Program has been implemented in most states. The concept that improved mental and physical fitness improves not only the health but also the productivity of employees is widely accepted in both the public and private sectors. Costs of these programs, including health club memberships, are shared by the employee and BLM. Most programs focus on physical fitness, but there are provisions to provide health risk appraisals to increase an employee's awareness and assessment of lifestyle health risks; intervention programs (combining health education and physical exercise to assist employee with, for instance, nutrition, weight control, stress management, cancer risk reduction, and parenting), and several incentive programs.

Utah's Model

Utah BLM offers what may be the most comprehensive health promotion program, in place as a pilot program since 1990. Managed by a full-time coordinator at the state office, Campaign Life offers employees throughout the state a health newsletter,

a health information center, a health risk appraisal, risk factor tracking, an exercise incentive program, administrative leave for exercise, a library, fitness assessments, workshops, and a weight control program. In the second year following program implementation, use of sick leave in Utah dropped 5%.

Families

In order to discuss employees' family needs, it is important to look at some national demographics relevant to this issue.

- More than 50% of women with children under one year in age now work outside the home, compared to 25% in 1970.

- In 1990, two-earner families composed as high as 90% of the working married population.

- Fewer than 10% of American families are the traditional household where the father works outside the home and the wife cares for the children in the home.

- The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not provide mandatory family and medical leave policies in either the public or private sectors.

- Only 40% of working women in the United States have maternity coverage.

- According to the Wall St. Journal, up to 35% of employees surveyed reported family-related travel problems.

- The Wall St. Journal also reports that elder care is an increasing concern for Americans in the workforce.

Maxiflex

BLM has implemented some organizational changes that have supported employees' family commitments, but more remains to be done. Implementation of the Maxiflex work schedule allows employees to adjust schedules to accommodate family commitments such as day care and school schedules. A 1991 Merit Systems Promotion Board study stated that agencies continue to report that flexible work arrangements "substantially improved morale." Other available options include job sharing and flexiplace permission.

Child Care

In some locations, the need for quality, reasonably priced day care for children of BLM employees has been addressed. The Tundra Tykes Child Care Center in Anchorage, Alaska, was established following a survey by the Anchorage Federal Executive Association that indicated a strong interest in federally sponsored child care centers. Although the situation for Anchorage families is improved, this is not the case in much of the nation. According to a 1990 Federally Employed Women survey, in spite of the fact that all major departments had developed on-site child care centers, less than 2,000 children were enrolled in such centers. Tuition costs averaged $400 per month, severely limiting access to employees, especially in the lower grade levels.

The Family Unit

In the realm of integration of work and family, little has been done in the nation. Pressure on the home front, combined with the demands of work, produce increased stress for employees. Many employees continually place family needs second to work priorities. Employees go home mentally and emotionally drained, with little energy for family. Employees feel compelled to work longer hours to meet the requirements of their jobs, which take more and more time away from their personal/family commitments. Employees tend to justify these extra hours as a one-time push, too often, however, the push is endless.

Lack of attention to family and personal concerns over time creates an extremely stressful situation for individuals and families, and burns out the workforce. This work environment contributes to divorce and family distress, rather than emphasizing the integrity of families and the employee's right to be a whole human being. It takes its toll on the workforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Self

Recommendation: Health and Wellness programs need to be expanded, instituted and standardized Bureauwide. BLM-Utah's Campaign Life serves as a model.

BMT Decision: Defer. Covered in other discussions.

Recommendation: The Employee Assistance Programs could be expanded to include more non-counseling activities such as workshops and conferences.

BMT Decision: Defer. Covered in other discussions.

Recommendation: Supervisors should extend use of IDPs as a tool for life planning, as well as for career improvement.

BMT Decision: Defer. Covered in other discussions.

Family

Recommendation: Continue support of Maxiflex and other adjusted work schedules.

BMT Decision: Defer. Covered in other discussions.

Recommendation: Increase availability of job sharing and flexiplace opportunities.

BMT Decision: Increase the availability of job sharing. Also, see the decision reached under the heading *Hours of Duty* (p. 9).

Recommendation: Reevaluate current policy on maternity leave and paternity leave. With current OPM guidelines, it is likely that a regulation change (supported by Congressional action) will be needed. Possible areas of consideration include allowing mothers to take at least six weeks of sick leave prior to and following birth, and allowing fathers of newborns to take paternity leave to care for newborns and use sick leave for it.

BMT Decision: Approved. It is expected that the Parental Leave Act will be passed by Congress this year.

Recommendation: The federal government, through a change in regulation, could combine sick and annual leave into one category, personal leave, allowing employees to carry all leave over, and use as approved by supervisor for personal situations.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Recommendation: Use flexiplace guidelines to allow employees to work at home (with supervisor's approval), so that they may care for sick relatives; alternatively, allow employees to take sick leave to take care of sick relatives (this requires a change in regulation).

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Expand and implement emphasis on federally subsidized/organized, affordable day care.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Complete a study of the BLM workforce to identify the personal and family concerns of our employees, and solicit their views on how to create a more supportive work environment.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Educate BLM managers about the demographics of the workforce; managers lead the organization and advocate practices that demonstrate awareness of these concerns.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Balancing Work and Family

Recommendation: Strive for a holistic view of employees, recognizing that society and our culture are continually changing.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Develop an improved support system for employees that is sensitive to alternative family lifestyles, especially dual career families and single parent families.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Begin an open dialogue with employees to address the issue of balancing work demands with personal and family needs. Emphasize the responsibility of the supervisor in providing support to subordinates.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Honor family commitments and personal time. Few work commitments are so important that they should necessitate the rescheduling of family vacations, for instance.

BMT Decision: Approved.

Recommendation: Communicate with employees about their personal lives, and constantly reinforce the importance to the organization of taking time to be a fully rounded human being.

BMT Decision: Rejected. The BMT recognizes the need to be sensitive to personal needs. Manager/supervisory trainings are appropriate forums to promote such philosophy.

Recommendation: Evaluate the feasibility of compensating employees for child or elder care expenses while the employee is in travel status.

BMT Decision: Rejected.

Recommendation: Manage travel needs with consideration of employees' personal lives, especially in terms of the cumulative effects of extensive overnight travel. Encourage front-end, weekday travel time prior to meetings.

BMT Decision: Approved.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF NEW PROCESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Many private companies and some public agencies have learned that a workforce with high morale is more productive. Studies show that employees who think their company's policies help to balance work and family commitments are far more likely to feel a commitment to the company. The benefits will include greater productivity, lower absenteeism, and greater commitment to the mission of BLM. These improvements will also assure a larger applicant pool from which to select employees, ensuring a more skilled and competent workforce. A workplace that treats its people well is a desirable place to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

Following evaluation of the issues discussed above, more direct analysis and implementation of the work/family holistic balancing issue is needed.

THE FUTURE WORKFORCE COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Corporations and public agencies across the United States are beginning to plan for the composition of their future workforces. It isn't easy — the explosion in information and communications technologies; advances in transportation technologies; rapid and sustained growth of population; emergence of tourism and recreation as major industries in the West; general aging of the population; introduction of new management techniques; awakening to the realities of cultural diversity; significant increase of women as executives, managers and technical professionals; flat and declining state and federal revenues and budgets; and reduction in the workforces of some major corporations and state and local governments — all present major forecasting and planning challenges. The Bureau of Land Management and its parent Department of Interior must address these realities in their workforce planning in order to more effectively serve the American public who is also its principal customer and constituent.

Another important consideration to the Bureau and Department in workforce composition is the direction of "program thrusts" and policies. What are the directions of the thrusts of the Administration, Congress, Department of Interior and the Public? What is the "workforce mix" and "workforce balance" that will meet those needs? How do we meet our goals and responsibilities in a time of flat-to-diminishing budgets through the flexible use of seasonal, part time, temporary and contract employees in addition to traditional permanent career employees? Again, what is the workforce mix that will meet these new realities? Clearly it is a time of significant and accelerated change. We must become more flexible and responsive.

THE NEW WEST

For those companies and agencies whose operations are located primarily in the western states, the challenge is even more complex. Albuquerque, Tucson, Phoenix, Fresno, Bakersfield, Sacramento, Las Vegas, Reno, Salt Lake City, Boise, Bend and Portland all share the distinction of having the highest growth rates in the nation. Some 5,000 new residents a month move to Las Vegas, and California is experiencing an immigration of 50,000 new residents a month!

The New West is experiencing more than a population and technology explosion. The new reality is that the Southwest including Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Southern Colorado and West Texas are also rapidly becoming a predominantly Hispanic, Spanish-speaking sub-region. Both language skills and awareness of cultural customs and practices, including communications, are now more important than ever.

Also within the Western States is a large and rapidly growing Asian population with the accompanying sounds of Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese and Japanese languages. Tourism by Asians, too, is growing rapidly. In some areas of the West and Alaska, Native Americans are the majority population and require the same understanding and sensitivity to custom and cultural practices as other distinct groups.

A HEALTHY MIX

The foregoing realities present major challenges to both large corporations and public agencies whose principal mission is to provide services to the public. All too often, however, our reaction is to compound the challenge by ignoring the new reality and attempting to redesign our workforces for some nonexistent future condition. This is a time when we must do the right thing and respond realistically. We must accommodate and facilitate change.

For example, the nation is experiencing a population that is living longer and in better health than anytime in this century. Life expectancy has reached 82 years. Yet a typical corporate or public agency reaction to this new reality is to observe that there are a lot of old veterans in the workforce who must retire to make way for younger workers. Certainly there

should be a healthy mix of ages and experience in any organization.

The graying of America, including the workforce, is the result of the post World War Two "Baby Boom." Baby Boomers born in the mid 1940s are now reaching their late forties and fifties. They are often described as a "bulge" in the population. Workforce planners who worry about the bulge, also seem to be preoccupied with the "pinch" in the workforce for the cohort of population born in the early 1950s to the early 1960s. This group is now 30-40 years old. The fact is that birthrates began to decline dramatically during this period and continue to decline. The result is that there are fewer young people in the national workforce.

Conventional knowledge tells us that we need to make room for the products of the "pinch" in birthrates by getting rid of those in the "bulge." Nothing could be so far from either reality or truth.

With a growing national economy and continuing expansion of both public and the private sectors, older experienced workers who desire to continue their careers and who are able to contribute productively to the agency's mission have significant value.

WORKFORCE REALITIES

Resulting from the new algorithm described above, is a new paradigm. The baby boomers and pre baby-boomers, who are experiencing longer and healthier lives, currently represent half of the national population — two-thirds by the year 2015 just 23 years from now. For this group to be encouraged or forced to retire at age 55, many at the prime of their professional abilities, places extraordinary demands on a nation's social costs. This can also deny an organization its institutional memory, mentoring, its wisdom and, in many cases, its creativity. In summary, it is wrong. Baby boomers at age 55 have an average of 30 years to live and a potential of 10 to 15 more productive work years.

As an organization, we need to face this reality and plan for a workforce that includes older technicians, professionals, managers and executives — a healthy mix of both younger and older employees. Productive careers by those in their 60s and 70s are rapidly becoming commonplace. Both national legislation and court decisions encourage, often mandate, continued employment of those who want to continue working. Indeed, protection of older employees is high on the national agenda.

A PART OF EXCELLENCE

Recommendation: In summary, in addition to advances in communications and information technology, new management methods, and the emergence of women as managers and executives, the Bureau of Land Management must begin to plan for serving the needs of both aging customers and the needs of a productive and aging workforce. That workforce also will need to be culturally diverse and bilingual in order to be effective — the use of Spanish, Navajo, Japanese, Vietnamese, German and other languages will be commonplace. It is a part of excellence.

There is neither the time nor the intent for this brief overview to be a comprehensive treatise on the future workforce of the Bureau of Land Management or the Interior Department. Such an in-depth analysis does need to be conducted. To date, BLM has completed a Baseline Demographic Study. The Workforce 2000 study has been published by the Department of Labor, and various publications have generally addressed both the future workforce composition of the private and public sectors in the United States — and the impact of diversity. Much more needs to be done.

Issues and questions which merit close attention include:

- Using new mixes of seasonal, temporary, contract and permanent full-time employees in the workforce.

- How to move to an interdisciplinary workforce which uses holistic approaches of biodiversity and ecosystem management while maintaining excellence in the fundamentals of forestry, wildlife and fisheries management, and range management.

- The impact of information and communications technology on the future workforce.

- Advocating multicultural diversity including regional realities.

- Women as managers and executives in the workforce.

- Effectively managing an aging workforce.

- Assisting disabled employees in the workplace.

BMT Decision: Approved.

COORDINATION WITH ONGOING HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING

The findings and recommendations of the team that prepared *Streamlining Personnel Management Processes* provide specific actions and opportunities for the Human Resources Strategic Planning effort currently underway. The Strategic Objectives of the new Human Resources Strategic Planning effort are:

- Reflect cultural diversity and tolerance of differences.

- Value employees by promoting development of a personal and professional vision by each employee, and by providing the resources for each to fulfill their individual and organizational potential.

- Set a standard for customer service that satisfies employee, organizational, and public needs.

- Promote honest and open communications . . . sensitive to individual and organizational needs.

- Increase environmental awareness and stewardship of natural resources.

- Empower employees to achieve individual and group excellence.

- Take a leadership role in Human Resources Management.